



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2006
WWW.USDOJ.GOV

CRM
(202) 514-2008
TDD (202) 514-1888

**FORMER SHERIFF OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA AND PRIVATE
ATTORNEY CONVICTED OF CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD THE GOVERNMENT
AND THEFT**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A federal jury in the Northern District of Alabama, Southern Division, convicted Jimmy Woodward, the former Jefferson County Sheriff, and Albert Jordan, a partner with the law firm of Wallace, Jordan, Ratliff & Brandt, L.L.C., on charges of conspiracy to defraud the United States and theft of government property, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division announced today.

Following today's conviction, the Honorable Lacey A. Collier, Senior Judge, Pensacola Division, scheduled sentencing for March 22, 2006.

On Nov. 3, 1998, Woodward, as the incumbent Jefferson County Sheriff, lost his election to challenger Mike Hale by 37 votes. Woodward challenged the election and hired Jordan to represent him. Jordan filed pleadings which alleged that convicted felons, ineligible to vote, had cast absentee ballots for Hale in the cities of Bessemer and Birmingham. Jordan and Woodward directed Jefferson County Sheriff's Department personnel to conduct blanket criminal history searches on the absentee voters in Bessemer and Birmingham.

On Nov. 18, 1998, media reports appeared that indicated law enforcement personnel were conducting indiscriminate criminal histories checks of private citizens. To conceal their illegal activity, Woodward falsely alleged to the media that District Attorney David Barber had authorized the blanket checks as part of a valid criminal investigation of voter fraud. On Nov. 20, 1998, Woodward initiated a voter fraud task force to further conceal his misuse of public office.

The defendants were convicted on the first three counts of the indictment – the first count charged both defendants, while the second count charged Woodward and the third charged Johnson. The five-count indictment charged in Count 1 that Woodward conspired with Jordan to defraud the United States, illegally converted government records for personal use, and engaged in misleading conduct towards potential witnesses with the intent to influence future testimony; in Count 2, theft of government property, that Woodward conveyed government information to Jordan without authority; in Count 3, theft of government property, that Jordan received and retained converted government information. The jury acquitted the defendants on the other two counts: Count 4, that Jordan used law enforcement personnel to access government computers without authority; and Count 5, that Woodward aided and abetted Jordan to access government computers.

The maximum penalties for these charges are five years in prison for the conspiracy charge, and 10 years in prison for the theft charge, along with fines up to \$250,000.

The case was tried by Brenda K. Morris, Deputy Chief, and Natasha Tidwell, Trial Attorney, both with the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section, headed by Section Chief Noel L. Hillman, and John H. England, III, Assistant U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Alabama, Southern Division.

###

06-013